



# NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

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Welcome to Navy History Matters—our weekly compilation of articles, commentaries, and blogs related to history and heritage. Every week we'll gather the top-interest items from a variety of media and social media sources and then link you to related content at NHHC's website ([history.navy.mil](http://history.navy.mil)), your authoritative source for Navy history.

## ★ WWII@75: Pacific Fleet Submarines Wreak Havoc on Japanese Ships

On Nov. 21, 1944, 75 years ago, a good week began for Pacific Fleet submarines when [USS Sealion](#) sank the Japanese battleship *Kongo* and destroyer *Urakaze* 60 miles north-northwest of Formosa. On Nov. 29, [USS Archerfish](#) sank Japanese carrier *Shinano* on her maiden voyage 160 nautical miles southwest of Tokyo Bay. *Shinano* was the largest warship sunk by any combatant submarine during [World War II](#). Then on Dec. 3, [USS Flasher](#) sank Japanese destroyer *Kishinami* and damaged a merchant ship in the South China Sea. *Flasher* was the only U.S. submarine that sank more than 100,000 tons of enemy shipping during the war. For more on the [submarine force](#) and [Japanese naval and merchant shipping losses during WWII](#), go to [NHHC's website](#).



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/80-G-450000/80-G-450237.html>

## ★ Navy Astronauts Walk on the Moon 50 Years Ago

On Nov. 19, 1969, 50 years ago, Navy astronauts Cmdr. [Charles Conrad Jr.](#) and Cmdr. [Alan L. Bean](#) became the third and fourth men to walk on the moon as part of the [Apollo 12 mission](#). Cmdr. [Richard F. Gordon Jr.](#), command module pilot, remained in lunar orbit. During the mission that lasted 10 days, 4 hours, and 36 minutes, the all-Navy crew collected lunar samples and photographed future landing sites. The flight back home was uneventful, but the crew did hold a televised news conference on Nov. 23 when their spacecraft was about 108,000 miles from Earth. On Nov. 24, Apollo 12 ended its flight by splashing down 400 miles southeast of American Samoa in the Pacific Ocean. Recovery was by HS-4 helicopters from [USS Hornet](#). For more on the [Navy's role in space exploration](#), go to [NHHC's website](#).



**Photo Link:** <https://www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/history/apollo-12-launches-for-second-moon-landing-nov-14-1969.html>

## ★ Midway, Petrel and the Pacific Graveyard

In the past few weeks, a convergence of Hollywood magic and deep-sea technology have rekindled a global appreciation for the U.S. Navy's historic 1942 [Battle of Midway](#) victory. On Nov. 8, "Midway" was released to theaters nationwide, and in October, the crew of R/V *Petrel* announced they had discovered the wrecks of Japanese carriers [Kaga](#) and [Akagi](#) off Midway. The staffs of U.S. Pacific Fleet and Naval History and Heritage Command offered sustained technical support for both the movie and *Petrel's* efforts. "There are people who know very little about the Navy or its history—and this movie and the images of these gravesites provide a vivid depiction of why our nation needs the U.S. Navy to defend our freedom, and to fight and win at sea," said Rear Adm. Charlie Brown, the Navy's chief of information. "They both serve to reinforce that a strong U.S. Navy ensures a free and open Indo-Pacific." For more, [read the U.S. Pacific Fleet release](#).



**Photo Link:** <https://www.cpf.navy.mil/news.aspx/110880>

### ★ Future USS John F. Kennedy CO, Crew Unveil Official Seal

Capt. Todd Marzano, commanding officer of Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) *John F. Kennedy*, and his crew recently unveiled the seal of the ship that honors the 35th president of the United States. Elements throughout the seal honor President [John F. Kennedy](#), his vision for [space exploration](#), and his service in the Navy. The 35 stars on the outer ring represent him as the 35th [commander in chief](#), the moon background represents his role in the nation's space program, and "CIX" or 109 represents his naval service as commander of [PT-109](#) during [World War II](#). The ship's motto, "Serve with Courage," exemplifies Kennedy's life. "John F. Kennedy displayed extraordinary courage, both in combat as a naval officer, and as president of the United States," said Marzano. "The seal design and the ship's motto are a very powerful and fitting way to honor his legacy." The ship is scheduled to be christened Dec. 7. For more, [read the U.S. Navy release](#).



**Photo Link:** <https://www.navy.mil/media/ggallery/hires/NNSGG-0781.jpg>

### ★ Rare Liberty Ship Has Been Part of Baltimore History Since WWII, Now in Jeopardy

"Baltimore's best-kept secret," said Capt. Alaina Basciano about the 440-foot, Liberty ship moored in Canton, MD. [SS John W. Brown](#) was built in less than two months, launched on Sept. 7, 1942, and took part in more than a dozen wartime voyages during [World War II](#). After the war, the ship served as a maritime high school in New York City until 1982. She returned to Baltimore in 1988 and was docked for about 30 years at Pier 1. Last year, the museum ship moved to Pier C to give officials time to find a permanent home. The ship's lease agreement for free mooring expires at the end of the year. It will have to leave the city where she was born in January if a permanent home is not found. "The loss of that kind of an artifact is truly a dreadful idea, as far as I'm concerned," said Alan Walden, a board member of Historic Ships in Baltimore. "We have to maintain our connection to the past or we really have no idea what our future is going to be." For more, [read the article](#) in the *Baltimore Sun*.



**Photo Link:** <https://www.nps.gov/places/ss-john-w-brown.htm>

### ★ Bridge Rededicated to Honor Navy Submariner Killed at Sea

After two years of construction, a bridge in Portsmouth, NH, was replaced and then rededicated to a [World War II](#) submarine crewmember who was killed in 1944. George Laderbush, a native of Portsmouth, was onboard [USS Flier](#) when it struck a Japanese mine south of Palawan during its second war patrol. The 14 crewmembers who did escape the sinking [submarine](#) faced a dilemma. They could swim to nearby Comiran Island but risk capture by the Japanese or swim toward a line of coral reefs. They decided the coral reefs were a better option. During the swim, the survivors relied on an early morning moonrise and flashes of lightning to guide their way. Six of the Sailors could not keep up and were never seen again. Laderbush, who served as a torpedoman's mate 2nd class, went down with the submarine. For more, [read the article](#) in the *Navy Times*.



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-98000/NH-98326.html>

### ★ SECNAV Announces Ships to be Named After Late Senators

Secretary of the Navy [Richard V. Spencer](#) announced two future Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers would be named in honor of two late U.S. senators who were also Navy veterans. Thad Cochran of Mississippi, who passed away in May of this year, was the 10th longest-serving senator in history. "A future USS *Thad Cochran* destroyer is a fitting tribute to a leader whose service in the Navy was a touchstone for how he conducted himself as a public servant," said Cochran's successor, Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith. Richard G. Lugar from Indiana, who died in April at the age of 87, will also have a destroyer named in his honor. Lugar served in the Navy from 1957 to 1960, including a stint as an intelligence briefer to then Chief of Naval Operations Adm. [Arleigh Burke](#). For more, read the articles on [Cochran](#) and [Lugar](#) at Military.com.



**Photo Link:** <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/11/13/navy-to-name-warship-after-hoosier-statesman/>

### ★ Navy Chief Inducted to Cryptologic Hall of Honor

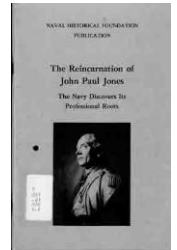
During a ceremony at the National Security Agency on Fort Meade, MD, recently, Chief Radioman Harry Kidder was inducted into the Cryptologic Hall of Honor. The hall of honor pays tribute to individuals who have made significant contributions to American cryptology. “The standards are high for induction,” said Army Gen. Paul Nakasone, who presided over the ceremony. “Thousands of people have contributed to our agency over its 67 year history, but only 94 of them are recognized in the hall of honor.” Kidder’s contributions began in 1910 when he learned to build, maintain, and operate radio and telegraphic communications systems with the Army. Kidder joined the Navy in 1914 as a radio electrician and became one of the best radiomen in the Asiatic Fleet. Kidder served nearly four decades in uniform and is credited with establishing the first formal cryptology training. For more, [read the U.S. Navy release](#).



**Photo Link:** [https://www.navy.mil/view\\_image.asp?id=12514&t=4](https://www.navy.mil/view_image.asp?id=12514&t=4)

### ★ NHHC Webpage of the Week

This week’s webpage of the week was recently published to NHHC’s library pages. [\*The Reincarnation of John Paul Jones: The Navy Discovers Its Professional Roots\*](#) does not re-tell the often-told account of Jones’ heroics and success in battle. Rather, the author—James C. Bradford—examines in depth the dramatically altered perception and image of [John Paul Jones](#) from pirate to the embodiment of wisdom and nobility. Bradford also provides a scholarly analysis of the impact of Jones and his thinking on naval education, organization, and the qualities required in a naval officer—all essential components of today’s professional U.S. Navy. Check it out today.



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/r/reincarnation-of-john-paul-jones-the-navy-discover-its-professional-roots.html>

### ★ Today in Naval History

On Nov. 19, 1943, [USS Nautilus](#) entered [Tarawa](#) lagoon on a reconnaissance mission to obtain information on weather, surf conditions, landing hazards, and the results of recent bombardments. At approximately 9:59 p.m., [USS Ringgold](#) sent a five-inch shell through the [submarine's](#) conning tower, damaging the main induction drain. Due to the highly secretive nature of the mission, the presence of *Nautilus* was unknown to *Ringgold*. Within two hours, the damage control party was able to repair the boat sufficiently enough to allow *Nautilus* to continue with her primary mission—land a 78-man scouting party, composed of 5th Amphibious Reconnaissance Co. Marines and an Australian scout, on Abemama.



For more dates in naval history, including your selected span of dates, see [Year at a Glance](#) at [NHHC’s website](#). Be sure to check this page regularly, as content is updated frequently.

**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/our-collections/art/exhibits/conflicts-and-operations/wwii/art-of-naval-amphibious-operations-from-wwii/beachhead-scene-marines-at-tarawa.html>